

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SP-03 AID-20 EB-11 NSC-07 RSC-01

CIEP-02 TRSE-00 SS-20 STR-08 OMB-01 CEA-02 CIAE-00

COME-00 FRB-02 INR-10 NSAE-00 XMB-07 OPIC-12 LAB-06

SIL-01 L-03 H-03 GSA-02 INT-08 FEA-02 FPC-01 PA-04

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FM AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9832

INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

AMCONSUL PARAMARIBO

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EIND, PFOR, XL, GY

SUBJECT: PRIME MINISTER BURNHAM'S COMMENTS ON TRINIDAD SMELTER TALKS

REF: PORT OF SPAIN 1352

1. PM BURNHAM RETURNED FROM TRINIDAD JUNE 8 AND HELD PRESS CONFERENCE IN WHICH HE COVERED MAIN POINTS OF PRESS RELEASES (COPIES POUCHED DEPT) AND RESPONDED TO QUESTIONS. BURNHAM WAS CLEARLY TIRED AND SOUNDED LETHARGIC IN SPEECH. FROM HIS TONE OF VOICE IT WAS EVIDENT HE RETURNED TO GUYANA WITH SOMETHING LESS THAN A STUNNING VICTORY, ALTHOUGH HE DID MANAGE TO INCORPORATE PLAN FOR GUYANA ALUMINUM SMELTER AS SECOND PHASE OF REGIONAL JOINT VENTURE.

2. GUYANA CURRENTLY PRODUCES BETWEEN 250,000 AND 300,000 LONG TONS OF ALUMINA PER YEAR. THIS COMES SOLELY FROM GUYANA BAUXITE COMPANY'S (GUYBAU) REDUCTION FACILITY. IN ORDER TO PROVIDE HALF
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THE ADDITIONAL ALUMINA NEEDED FOR A 200,000 LONG TON SMELTER

(ENVISIONED IN THE PLAN) WHICH WOULD BE ABOUT 200,000 LONG TONS, EITHER GUYANA WILL HAVE TO SHIP PRIMARILY TO THE REGIONAL SMELTER OR EXPAND ITS ALUMINA CAPACITY BY 40 TO 50 PERCENT. IN ANTICIPATION OF HAVING ITS OWN ALUMINA PLANT, GUYANA HAS PRESSED FOR OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE, I.E., FROM JAMAICA AND TRINIDAD, TO EXPAND ITS ALUMINA CAPACITY EARLIER. THIS IS WHAT IS BEHIND PRESS RELEASE STATEMENT THAT "GUYANA TO OFFER EQUITY PARTICIPATION TO THE OTHER TWO GOVERNMENTS IN FACILITIES FOR THE PRODUCTION OF ALUMINA FOR THE SMELTER".

3. WHATTHIS MEANS FOR INVESTMENT IN GUYANA IS: (A) ENLARGEMENT OF EXISTING OR CONSTRUCTION NEW ALUMINA PLANT: (B) CONSTRUCTION OF A HYDRO-ELECTRIC FACILITY OF AT LEAST 500 MEGAWATTS INITIALLY: (C) CONSTRUCTION OF A 200,000 TONS SMELTER CONCOMITANTLY WITH THE HYDRO PLANT. ALTHOUGH GOG TALKS OF GUYANA SMELTER BEING READY BY 1980, EMBASSY STILL BELIEVES THIS NOT RPT NOT LIKELY TO BE REALIZED IN NEXT TEN YEARS. ACCESS ROADS TO PROPOSED HYDRO SITES ALONE POSE FORMIDABLE ENGINEERING PROBLEMS. MOREOVER, FINANCING FOR THE HYDRO PROJECT MAY HAVE BEEN DISCUSSED IN TRINIDAD, BUT ALMOST CERTAINLY ASSISTANCE WILL HAVE TO COME FROM OUTSIDE SOURCES SUCH AS WORLD BANK.

4. OTHER COMMENTS FROM BURNHAM INCLUDED SUPPORT FOR JAMAICA'S HEAVY TAX ON FOREIGN BAUXITE COMPANIES, AND STATEMENT THAT GUYANA'S ENVISIONED HYDRO ELECTRIC PROJECT WILL BE ON THE MAGNITUDE OF 3000 MEGAWATTS. FORMER WAS PART OF JOINT ANNOUNCEMENT IN TRINIDAD BY GOG AND GOTT, LATTER WAS "PIE IN THE SKY" FOR LOCAL CONSUMPTION ONLY. KREBS

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